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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KUWAIT 001467

SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: AMB. JONES CONSULTS WITH KUWAITI PM ON KEY  
OBJECTIVES IN IRAQ, PM PLEDGES SUPPORT

Classified By: Ambassador Richard LeBaron for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

1. (C) Summary: The Ambassador and Senior Advisor and Coordinator for Iraq Policy, Ambassador Richard Jones, met with Prime Minister Shaykh Sabah Al-Ahmed Al-Sabah on April 9 to discuss political, security and economic support for the new Iraqi Transitional Government (ITG). Ambassador Jones, who had just returned from Iraq, briefed the Prime Minister on recent developments in Iraq's transition to democracy, laying out the top priorities that we and the Iraqis would be focussing on in the coming months: defeating the insurgency, completion of the political process, strengthening of the rule of law, improvement of essential services, development of provincial governments, and promotion of economic security. The Prime Minister expressed Kuwait's support for the political process in Iraq, and its relief at the selection of a Presidency Council and Prime Minister. He offered Kuwait's continued economic support for Iraq, lamenting that a KD 60 million aid proposal had not been taken advantage of by the Interim Iraqi Government. The Prime Minister agreed in principle to debt relief for Iraq, but noted the need for National Assembly approval. He twice referred to the need to maintain the UN Compensation Commission (UNCC) claims process, and not link this to relief for Iraq's financial burdens. On security, the PM said Kuwait had extended an offer to Iraq to train up to 500 police for a year. In response to Amb. Jones' presentation about it, the PM said the GOK would happily participate in the upcoming conference U.S./EU-sponsored on Iraq. He added that Kuwait and Iraq would be exchanging Ambassadors in the near future. The PM said the Kuwaiti government would issue a statement at its Sunday cabinet meeting in support of the new Iraqi government, (which it did).

Participants:

U.S.  
Ambassador Richard Jones, Senior Advisor and Coordinator for Iraq Policy  
Ambassador Richard LeBaron  
Mr. Larry McDonald, Treasury Department  
Col. Philip Smith, Department of Defense  
Mr. Matthew Fuller, Special Assistant to Ambassador Jones  
Mr. Constantinos Nicolaidis, U.S. Embassy Kuwait (notetaker)

Kuwait  
Prime Minister Shaykh Sabah Al-Ahmed Al-Sabah  
Ambassador Mohammed Abulhassan, Senior Prime Ministerial Advisor  
Ambassador Khaled Al-Jarallah, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
Ambassador Khaled Al-Babtain, Director, MFA Americas Division  
Shaykh Fawaz Saud Al-Sabah Asst. U/S, Prime Minister's Diwan (notetaker)

End Summary.

Laying Out the Major Goals

2. (C) During their April 9 meeting, Senior Advisor and Coordinator for Iraq Policy, Ambassador Richard Jones and Prime Minister Shaykh Sabah Al-Ahmed Al-Sabah discussed the political process in Iraq, and the way ahead. Ambassador Jones, who had just returned from Iraq, said he had had the opportunity to meet with all members of the Presidency Council and other senior Iraqi officials, who had agreed on a number of key priorities for their new government: 1) defeat the insurgency; 2) complete of the political process by adopting the new constitution and holding new elections; 3) strengthen the rule of law through a capable police force, trained judiciary, and adequate prison service; 4) provide essential services such as electricity and fuel; 5) develop provincial governments by empowering provincial councils to manage projects; and 6) promote economic security through creation of jobs, forgiveness of debt, implementation of IMF agreements, and restoration of the agricultural sector. Noting that the accomplishment of these goals would help create a democratic and federal Iraq that would contribute to peace and stability in the entire region, Ambassador Jones urged Kuwait to participate in a planned U.S/EU/Iraqi conference to be held in early June. He further encouraged Kuwait to lend any and all support to meeting these goals, be

it symbolic, political or financial.

#### Security Cooperation

13. (C) The Prime Minister opened by expressing Kuwait's pleasure with the January 30 Iraqi elections and the subsequent naming of the Presidency Council. He said Iraq was on the correct path, but noted the difficulty would be convincing Sunnis it was in their best interest to participate in the political process. He highlighted former IIG President Shaykh Ghazi Al-Yawar as a good example for Sunnis, but noted somewhat sardonically that he had accepted a Vice President position in the new government. As a Sunni himself, Shaykh Sabah said he was "bitter" that Sunni elements had chosen to fight other Iraqis, rather than joining together. Disparaging this lack of Sunni commitment, he mentioned that no Sunni IIG member had visited Kuwait to discuss cooperation between the two states. On security, Shaykh Sabah articulated Kuwait's indebtedness to the U.S. for having rid Kuwait and Iraq of "these devils." He urged U.S. forces to make more use of former military personnel in Iraq's new security forces. Even among officers, he said, "not all of them are Ba'athists." The Prime Minister said that Kuwait had already extended an offer to Iraq to train up to 500 officers for one year in its police academy, but had received a response requesting training for 10,000.

#### Kuwait Committed to Economic/Reconstruction Support

14. (C) On economic support, Shaykh Sabah said Kuwait had approached former IIG President Iyad Allawi's office eight months ago and offered KD 60 million as part of their overall USD500 million pledge to Iraq to fund construction of hospitals, schools and clinics. To date, he said, Kuwait had not received any plans from Iraqi authorities specifying where they wanted these funds spent. Shaykh Sabah said Kuwait stands ready to fund projects such as clinics and hospitals "from Basra to Kirkuk," but said the labor and engineers should be "all Iraqis."

#### Debt Relief Agreed

15. (C) Regarding debt relief, the PM said Kuwait was committed in principle, but relief would require approval by the National Assembly. He warned the delegation not to further reduce the UNCC compensation level below its current 5 percent rate, which would have the effect of linking debt reduction with the UNCC issue in the minds of MPs, making the passage of debt relief difficult. UNCC funds "do not belong to the government, but to the people," he said. "Do not mix Iraqi debts to Kuwait with compensation." Shaykh Sabah noted that Kuwait had told Special Envoy Baker and others that it would follow the 80 percent debt reduction agreed by the Paris Club. Ambassador LeBaron pointed out that large payments had recently been made to Kuwaiti UNCC claimants.

#### Exchange of Ambassadors Forthcoming

16. (C) The Prime Minister said that Iraq had proposed an Ambassador to Kuwait, and his name was with the Amiri Diwan for approval. He said Kuwait would reciprocate when it could ensure the security of its new envoy. (We will report on this septel.) He said Kuwait would participate in the international gathering in Europe in June.

17. (U) Baghdad: Minimize Considered.

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